


FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT DIVISION VEHICLES	POLICY NUMBER 17.15
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17.15.01 PURPOSE

To establish policy, guidelines and limitations concerning the use of Division vehicles by members of the Florida Highway Patrol.

17.15.02 AUTHORITY

Chapter 321, Florida Statutes

Rule 60B-1, Florida Administrative Code

17.15.03 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to ensure that all members are equipped and capable of responding to law enforcement responsibilities at all times; to ensure that Division vehicles are properly maintained and operated in a legal manner.

17.15.04 OBJECTIVE

To establish specific guidelines to ensure that all members are equipped and capable of responding to law enforcement responsibilities at all times; to ensure Division vehicles are properly maintained and operated in a legal manner.

17.15.05 PROCEDURES

A. VEHICLES

1. A Division vehicle will be assigned to each sworn member of the Florida Highway Patrol in order for the member to respond to law enforcement responsibilities at all times, regardless of duty assignment.
 - a. These assignments are made pursuant to Rule 60B-1.008, Florida Administrative Code, Special Assignment.
 - b. It will be the responsibility of the member to provide reasonable security, maintain, and operate the vehicle in accordance with the regulations in Chapters 6.03 and 17.05 of this manual and the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations.

2. Members are responsible for determining that their patrol vehicle is properly equipped with shotgun, extra ammunition, appropriate traffic safety equipment, first aid kit, fire extinguisher and communication equipment as well as required Division forms before beginning their shift.
3. All Division vehicles will be inspected by members to see that the vehicle is undamaged and ready for service prior to being driven. Members should be alert for faulty or inoperative equipment. Special attention should be given to brakes, lights, and emergency equipment. Any damage to the vehicle or inoperative or faulty equipment will be reported to a supervisor immediately.
4. Members will ensure their vehicle is adequately fueled before ending their shift so as to provide for immediate response to law enforcement responsibilities should the member be called back to duty.
5. Members will not check speedometers for any person by means of the Division vehicle's speedometer, Division radar or any other speed timing device.

B. VEHICLE OPERATION

1. All members will operate their vehicles with due regard for safety and in compliance with all traffic laws regulating the operation of emergency vehicles whether in an emergency situation or on routine patrol. When responding to emergency or pursuit situations members shall follow the policies outlined in Chapter 17.05 of this manual.
2. Members will use all occupant restraint devices while operating Division vehicles, leased or rental vehicles, and all personal vehicles used on state business. The operator of a Division vehicle will require all passengers to use the vehicle's occupant restraint devices.
 - a. Members will not operate a Division vehicle in which the safety belt in the driver's position is inoperable. No person shall be transported in a seating position in which the safety belt is inoperable.
 - b. Members shall not modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle's safety belts or occupant restraint systems.
 - c. Inoperable restraint systems will be immediately reported to a supervisor. Prompt action will be taken to replace or repair the system.
 - d. While stopping a vehicle for a violation, members may remove the safety belt just prior to the stop so as to enable the member to quickly exit their vehicle if

necessary. Members should exercise caution to ensure the violator is going to stop so as to avoid becoming involved in a pursuit without the use of the restraint system.

4. Members will park patrol vehicles in such a manner that they are in a position to exit quickly and easily in an emergency situation.
5. The routine carrying or transporting of gasoline or other flammable liquids in the trunk of a Division vehicle is prohibited. However, members are authorized to transport gasoline or other petroleum products in appropriate containers when necessary to motorists who have become disabled from a lack of fuel. Such transportation shall be consistent with safety regulations regarding same.
6. The anti-theft device on pursuit vehicles will be activated when the driver leaves the vehicle unattended with the engine running or keys in the ignition to provide power to the emergency equipment or radio. The location of the control switch or any other information will not be revealed to non-law enforcement personnel unless authorized by a supervisor.
7. When a Division vehicle is involved in a traffic crash, members will render necessary aid to the injured, remove any hazard to life or property in accordance with Chapter 316, Florida Statutes, and immediately notify a supervisor. The supervisor will conduct an appropriate investigation in accordance with DHSMV Management Manual Policy #10.02 and Division regulations.
8. Spouses or family members may be authorized to travel in patrol vehicles when the member is attending an official function on Department business and spouse or family members are included as part of the official function, and when such attendance will enhance the image of the Florida Highway Patrol. This authorization is made pursuant to Rule, 60B-1.008, Florida Administrative Code, and DHSMV Management Manual Policy #10.02.

C. DRIVING PATROL UNITS OFF-DUTY

1. All members on or off-duty who drive or occupy a patrol vehicle shall be in uniform or appropriate civilian attire, as defined in Chapter 6.01, FHP Policy Manual. Members assigned to field units shall check in-service via radio with the local patrol station. The only exceptions concerning wearing civilian attire while operating a Division vehicle off-duty are:
 - a. A member may wear civilian attire consisting of denim or casual slacks and collared shirt to take a Division vehicle

to a facility for service or repairs. Torn, frayed or excessively worn slacks, sandals or open toed shoes, and clothing bearing printed words or graphics are prohibited. Small manufacturer's trademarks or other small logos are permissible.

- b. A member, upon written approval of the Troop Commander, may operate their patrol vehicle while traveling to and from an authorized gym or exercise facility. The member may wear appropriate gym clothing while operating their vehicle. It is also permissible for a member to change from their FHP uniform to appropriate gym clothing at the end of their shift prior to going to the gym if a changing facility is available for their use.
 - c. Members, upon written approval of their Troop Commander, may operate their patrol vehicles while traveling to and from college or school. The member may wear civilian clothing, as described in "a" above, while operating their vehicle. It is also permissible for a member to change from their FHP uniform to civilian clothing at the end of their shift prior to going to the college or school if facilities to change are available.
 - d. When members are assigned to the FHP Training Academy, instructions concerning vehicle use will be given by the Chief Training Officer.
2. In instances when members are operating FHP vehicles (both marked and unmarked) while not in uniform, they are required to be in possession of their FHP credentials (ID card and Badge), Department issued firearm, and handcuffs. This will enable them to take appropriate action or respond to emergency situations if the need arises.

D. STORAGE OF DAMAGED OR INOPERABLE FHP VEHICLES

FHP vehicles damaged in traffic crashes or inoperable due to fire damage, water damage or other similar causes shall be stored at FHP stations, Department of Transportation yards or other state facilities where the Division will not incur storage charges.

- 1. Division vehicles will not be stored at commercial wrecker storage buildings or facilities where they will accumulate storage charges.
- 2. Troop Commanders are responsible for locating suitable storage sites and publishing a list of approved sites within their areas of command. Troop Commanders will update these lists annually.